

Claims

- [c1] 1. A tape measure having a double-axis reel assembly comprising:
- a primary axis;
 - a primary spool and a first gear turnable about the primary axis;
 - a flexible measuring tape blade wound upon the primary spool and normally in a fully retracted position on the primary spool;
 - a secondary axis;
 - a secondary spool and a second gear turnable about the secondary axis;
 - the secondary spool having a self-restoring spring; and
 - an endless flexible member connecting the first gear and the second gear, whereby extension of the tape blade from its retracted position causes turning of the primary spool which in turn causes turning of the secondary spool to place the secondary spool in a spring-wound condition which will retract the tape blade upon release of the tape blade from an extended position.
- [c2] 2. The tape measure of Claim 1 further comprising a housing for enclosing said primary spool and first gear,

said secondary spool and second gear, and said endless flexible member, the housing having a top, bottom, sides and ends with the measuring tape blade having a portion extending outside one end of the housing, said portion being adapted to be gripped by the user of the tape measure so as to extend the tape blade from its normally retracted position substantially inside the housing.

- [c3] 3. The tape measure of Claim 2 wherein the housing is oblong shaped.
- [c4] 4. The tape measure of Claim 3 wherein the proportions of the housing are approximately 3: 1.5: 1 in length: width: height.
- [c5] 5. The tape measure of Claim 2 further comprising a tape blade lock combined with the housing and having an actuator extending outside the housing for operation by the user to selectively maintain the measuring tape blade at a desired extended position during use.
- [c6] 6. The tape measure of Claim 5 in which the actuator of the tape blade lock extends outside one of the sides of the housing and is operable by the user to selectively engage and hold the primary spool thereby maintaining the measuring tape blade at a desired extended position

as long as the actuator is held by the user.

[c7] 7. The tape measure of Claim 5 in which the actuator of the tape blade lock extends from the bottom of the housing and is operable by the user to selectively engage and hold the measuring tape blade thereby maintaining the measuring tape blade at a desired extended position as long as the actuator is held by the user.

[c8] 8. The tape measure of Claim 5 in which the actuator of the tape blade lock extends from the same end of the housing as the measuring tape blade and is operable by the user to selectively engage and hold said measuring tape blade so as to maintain said measuring tape blade at a desired extended position during use.

[c9] 9. The tape measure of Claim 8 in which the actuator has a lock that maintains the actuator in a locked position holding the measuring tape blade in an extended position when the actuator is released by the user.